

The Mourholme Magazine of Local History

2008-2009 No.2



*Mourholme Local History Society (Charity Reg. No. 512765)
Covers the Old Parish of Warton containing the Townships of
Warton-with-Lindeth, Silverdale, Borwick, Priest Hutton,
Carnforth, Yealand Conyers and Yealand Redmayne*

The Mourholme Magazine of Local History is issued by the Mourholme Local History Society for the study of the history of the ancient Parish of Warton, with its seven constituent townships; Borwick, Carnforth, Priest Hutton, Silverdale, Warton-with-Lindeth, Yealand Conyers and Yealand Redmayne.

The Society is named after the Manor of Mourholme, the home of the medieval Lords of Warton, Their seat, the Mourholme Castle, stood on the site now covered by Dockacres.

Yearly subscriptions are £10.00 (£18.00 for family or school membership) and include evening lectures, copies of the Mourholme Magazine and access to the Society's archival material.

Application for membership should be made to the treasurer Brian Ager, 51 The Row, Silverdale, Carnforth, LA5 0UG (01524 701491 brianager@btopenworld.com).

Contributions to the magazine – articles, letters, notes – are invited. Please send them to the current editor Jenny Ager, 51 The Row, Silverdale, Carnforth, LA5 0UG (01524 701491 jenny_ager@btopenworld.com)

* * * * *

All rights reserved

THE MOURHOLME MAGAZINE OF LOCAL HISTORY

2008 – 2009, No.2

Price 75p

| Contents: | Page |
|---|------|
| THE MOURHOLME MAGAZINE OF LOCAL HISTORY | 1 |
| BACK TO 1946 Clive Holden | 3 |
| CONCERNING ROBERT BIRKETT WEARING BUTCHER IN MAIN STREET WARTON | 8 |
| A GLIMPSE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE OF A LOCAL LADY TO HER SISTER IN BRISTOL Dianne Dey | 10 |
| REPORTS OF EVENING MEETINGS Jane Parsons, Jenny Ager | 15 |
| PROGRAMME MARCH AND APRIL 2009 | 22 |
| MEETING DAY | 22 |
| MOURHOLME SUMMER OUTING 2009 THE DALES GATEWAY | 23 |
| NOTES AND QUERIES | 24 |

THE MOURHOLME MAGAZINE OF LOCAL HISTORY

Currently there is an upsurge in interest in things historical, particularly in family history. There is the popular television programme “Who do you think you are?”, with an exhibition at Olympia in February. The 1911 census has just been made available and internet resources seem to increase day by day.

The Mourholme Local History Society receives queries from people who are interested in our patch and the people who lived here. One of the articles in this edition of the magazine is from information found by Norman Wearing who had ancestors who lived in Warton; it would be good if we could help him with his research. Clive Holden paints a picture of Carnforth in the 1940s, but there are many gaps, perhaps someone has the pieces that could help complete the puzzle. Please see revived “Notes and Queries” section on page 24.

I was looking through old copies of the Magazine and was interested in the aims of the magazine as stated in the first edition in the autumn of 1982. I reproduce the text below:

*“With this issue the Mourholme Local History Society introduces its new publication, **The Mourholme Magazine of Local History.***

Four times a year we will try to fill its pages with interesting material relating to the history of the old ecclesiastical parish of Warton.

We hope, of course, that we will be successful and that our members will eagerly look forward to reading each issue,

cover to cover, glad they are members of an active and productive local history society. But our intention goes even further. We want to provide our local history enthusiasts with a medium for communicating their ideas and sharing their knowledge with us and with each other. Their contributions will be the keystone of the magazine's success. We also hope our magazine may provide the nudge that pushes "interest" over into "enthusiasm" and transforms the passive local historian into the active one.

In short, we hope our members will not only read our magazine but also write it. We will be pleased to receive all contributions. Articles may be any reasonable length and on any aspect of the history of our area. Subsequent issues of the magazine will include a "Notes and Queries" section for comments or questions.

Our goal is a magazine that is interesting, stimulating, readable, and good. During this first year, we would be very grateful for any criticisms or suggestions that would help us to that end."

At the moment we are only aiming to produce two issues a year rather than four, as was the original intention, but I would like to reiterate the other aims to produce a good magazine, read and written by you the members.

Jenny Ager

BACK TO 1946

Clive Holden

Among several items squirreled away from the past, is an electioneering leaflet on behalf of F. Gander for the Carnforth Urban District Council election of April 1946. I cannot say that I knew Fred Gander well, as he was the head master of Carnforth Church of England School when I was a pupil, but I certainly remember him. He was a sandy haired gentleman who wore spectacles and stood no nonsense from his pupils, though he was probably mild mannered enough out of school hours. One day for some unremembered reason I happened to be late (half a minute? two minutes?) for afternoon school, and was sent from Mrs. Freeman's room to the adjoining room, Mr. Gander's, where I lined up with two or three fellow unfortunates. Out came the cane and shortly afterwards I returned to Mrs. Freeman's room wringing my hand (or was it hands; I can't remember) and shedding a torrent of tears. It was painful but it did me no lasting harm, and I made a point of never being late again. But enough of that digression, or it could start a debate about that nasty word discipline, which is so often nowadays taken to be synonymous with cruelty. My chances of becoming better acquainted with Mr. Gander (and his cane?) were ruined when I passed the scholarship and went on to the local grammar school.

It is obvious from Mr. Gander's election leaflet that he came to Carnforth (presumably as head master) in 1935; without further research I am unable to say when he left, but of more interest are the contents of the leaflet itself which shed light on the kinds of things happening at the time.

We find that at the time there was a Nursing Association (when was it founded and does it still exist?).

There was also a National Savings organisation which had raised over half a million pounds, presumably for the war effort. Was it synonymous with War Savings, and was it responsible for special events such as Dig for Victory Week and War Weapons Week? Older townsfolk will remember the large signs which used to be displayed outside Carnforth U.D.C. offices in Upper Market Street indicating the amount of money raised.

As indicated in the leaflet the A.R.P. (Air Raid Precautions) organisation was set up in the late 1930s when the possibility of war became ever more likely, and indeed a cigarette company issued a set of 50 cards all about Air Raid Precautions. What we do not know (unless someone can tell us) is the extent of local A.R.P. services, what the duties of a Deputy Controller would be, and was the Gas Identification Section concerned with enemy gas bombs (which were never used) or identifying gas leakages in bombed properties? Thankfully the skills of the local A.R.P. personnel, though no doubt well practised, would rarely if ever be called upon in earnest.

What was the function of The Forces Welfare Committee? Did it involve organisations such as the W.V.S. (Women's Voluntary Service) providing cups of tea etc. for service personnel in trains which stopped at Carnforth station, or did it have a wider remit, such as helping needy families of local servicemen? Then, of course, there were those soldiers based at the old Iron Works site (mainly Pioneer Corps?) and the

A.T.S. (Auxiliary Territorial Service) girls at the Station Hotel; did they receive help from the Welfare Committee?

Two final questions: is there still a Carnforth Library Committee, and where is or was Wolvey?

See overleaf for Mr. Gander's election leaflet.

Can anyone help Clive with his queries? Please see the "Notes and Queries" section on page 24.

Carnforth Urban District Council Election, 1946.

Wolvey,
Carnforth.

Dear Sir or Madam,

At the request of a number of ratepayers, I have agreed to be nominated for election to Carnforth Urban District Council at the forthcoming election on April 1st.

After eleven years among you, during which time I have served the Community in various ways, I am well-known to the majority of the electors. Since 1937 I have been hon- treasurer of the Nursing Association, and since 1940, as hon. district secretary, I have been responsible for the organization of National Savings in Carnforth & district, which area, has raised, during the period, well over half-a-million pounds (£544, 598.) In 1941 I was elected chairman of the local Forces Welfare Committee, and I am a member of the Welcome Home Committee. I have, from 1938 onwards, been a member of the local A.R.P. Services, both in the Gas Identification Section and as one of the Deputy Controllers. My interest in, and work on behalf of the Church, not only in Carnforth, (where I have been hon. secretary of the Church Council from 1937 and Vicar's Warden from 1941,) but in the Deanery and Diocese is known to the Churchpeople. During the past year the

County Council has invited me to serve as one of its representatives on the Carnforth Library Committee.

I stand as an Independent Candidate, resolved that the dictate of no political party shall control my actions. My sole guide in any decisions I may be called upon to make, shall be, the furtherance of the welfare of our town and its inhabitants.

All men and women over twenty-one years of age who were entitled to vote at the Parliamentary and County Council elections have the right to vote, and I suggest that it is their duty to exercise that right. Do not be forced to say afterwards "I wish so-and-so had got in, I was so sure he would, that I did not bother to vote".

You have four votes, but you may only give one vote to any one candidate. You need not use the other three unless you wish. Your polling station is, as usual, the Church School, between 8.0. a.m. and 8.0. p.m.

Unfortunately I shall not be in Carnforth on the day of the Election, as I shall be in London in readiness for a National Savings Conference on April 2nd.

I appeal to you for your vote.

Yours sincerely,

F. GANDER.

**CONCERNING ROBERT BIRKETT WEARING,
BUTCHER IN MAIN STREET WARTON**

The following cases were reported in the Preston Chronicle and the Lancaster Advertiser.

Lancaster Quarter Sessions 9th October 1861

“Wilful and malicious damage. On Saturday last, one of the worst cases of wilful and malicious damage which ever came under our notice, was brought before the county magistrates at the judge’s lodgings, when John Laycock, of Marton, [sic. misprint for Warton?] was charged with wilfully damaging a rein and trace, and a cart cover, the property of Mr. Robert Wearing, butcher of Marton, by cutting the same, and doing damage to the amount of 15s. Mr. Clark appeared on behalf of Mr. Wearing, and the prisoner was defended by Mr. Sharp – It appeared from the evidence that Mr. Wearing was in Carnforth with his horse and cart, and being called into the Carnforth Inn, he left his horse and cart in the care of a youth named Robert Airey, Mr. Wearing had not been long in the house before the defendant went in, and because Mr. Wearing refused to treat him and declined to give him a ride in his cart, the defendant became very abusive, and Mr. Wearing and his friends went into another apartment. Laycock then went out of the house, and was seen by the youth Airey to go up to the horse, and “fumble” about it, and then Airey saw the trace drop to the ground. Laycock then went back into the house, and Airey went to examine the gears, and found the trace and rein cut in two, and on challenging the defendant with having done it, he made no reply. The cart cover, which cost £4 a short time ago, was afterwards found to be cut to the extent of sixteen inches – the bench considered the case clearly proved, and fined the defendant in the full amount allowed by the law,

viz., 15s. the amount of the damage, 17s. costs, 12s. allowance to witnesses, and 21s. to the advocate, making a total of £3 5s.: or the alternative of two months hard labour, in the house of correction.”

Lancaster Quarter Session 31st March 1866

“**Curious Conviction**, - At the county petty sessions, on Saturday Robert Wearing, a farmer, of Warton, was charged with an infringement of the cattle plague regulations, by bringing twenty sheep from Holme, in Westmorland to Warton in Lancashire, on the 15th inst. It appears that a policeman went to the defendant’s house to obtain some certificates, which had been granted for the removal of certain sheepskins, when Mrs. Wearing gave him along with them a certificate for the removal of twenty sheep from a place beyond this jurisdiction. The case was represented to the superintendent, of police, and a summons was issued. It transpired that the certificate had been countersigned by Mr. W.B. Bolden, a magistrate, who stated that at the time of authorising the removal of the sheep he was unaware of the real alterations In the Order of Council for extending the operations of previous order. – The Bench thought it was a case which could not be passed over, and they fined the defendant in the nominal sum of 1s., with £1, 2d. costs.”

Robert Wearing was born in Cartmel in about 1829 he was married to Margaret Birkett. The 1861 census shows him living in Main Street Warton, with his occupation given as “master butcher”.

Can any reader give a present day Mr. Wearing any information about his ancestor?

**A GLIMPSE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE OF A LOCAL LADY
TO HER SISTER IN BRISTOL**

Dianne Dey

In 1648 England was at war with itself, the Royalists were routed at Preston and Parliament voted to bring Charles I to trial. Trevelyan tells us that *“in the North-West, the local civil war between feudal Catholicism and the Puritanism of the clothing districts was exceptionally bitter”*.¹ In the same year, George Fox founded The Society of Friends which grew out of the forms of the Westmorland Seekers; tortuous times that had been preceded by recurrent disease and famine.

Very aware of the progress of the Civil War and not as protected from its consequences as we might imagine were Thomas and Anne Tolson residing at Tolson Hall on the west side of Burneside. The residence is clearly marked on Jeffrey’s 1770 map of Westmorland – but as Townson Hall – and is still standing in its own parkland today. Thomas inherited the medieval hall to which in 1638 he added the middle section: *“this is evidenced by the stained glass windows and also by the plaster inscription on two sides of a wall 6 feet thick, and it is interesting that a small room was discovered in the inside of this wall, very probably a priest hole ... On one side of the inscription on one of the windows is a sketch of a roll of leaf tobacco and a cable of thick twist on the other and three clay pipes and it is clear that the gentleman earned the ‘meanes’ to build through the manufacture of tobacco”* and according to Thomas, also by the grace of God.² Tobacco was introduced into England in 1584 which suggests that he was one of the early and

apparently successful manufacturers of tobacco products in the north.

Anne's sister, Elizabeth Askew, lived in Bristol and many letters that had passed between the two ladies were found in an old escritoire in Bristol and came into the possession of James Cropper, who had taken his bride to live at Tolson Hall in 1876 (he was the father of Margaret Cropper (1886-1980), the poet).³

The following are extracts from one letter, clearly composed by a well-educated lady and as fresh and vivid as the day they were written.

To Elizabeth Askew - June 30 1648

"My Dear Sister

I rejoice to say we are all in good health.

My husband has been as usual much engaged, he expected to find a quiet home here for our older years, but it would seem that troubles and cares about public questions fill the whole land, at any rate they press us heavily here. I told thee of the difficulties into which we were put at the time of the election of a minister for the chapel at Burneside, when our neighbour, Richard Braithwaite of Burneside Hall [whom she later describes as "*very hot against what he calls Puritans*"] was so overbearing at the meeting and endeavoured to press forward a friend of his ... he called Thomas a cabbage merchant and sneered at him openly, which troubled him much. Since then we have had political troubles. One day Huddleston Philipson of Crook Hall, came here with some noisy followers on horses and demanded beer. Then they urged Thomas to join their party and to go with them to attack Colonel Briggs at Kendal,

who is now Mayor. It was difficult to get the party away without uproar ... we learned afterwards that one of them Robert, who is called Robin the Devil, got more drink, and then finding the Mayor was at service in the church, he rode his horse within the door and cried out to the Mayor to come out ... One day Col. Briggs with a party came here to ask about those who had attacked him and unfortunately he saw some painted glass which my husband brought home last year and has put into a window. It has the Royal Arms in it and Briggs was very wroth and said he would have broken it only he would leave it to witness against us ... it was partly through him that John Laybourn of Cunswick [another hall nearby] got into trouble for keeping a Popish Priest and had to dismiss the priest and pay a fine. We hear he had to give a bond of £300 that he would not go five miles from Cunswick without permission of Col. James Bellingham, of Levens Hall but it is said he goes at night to a priest hidden at Dodding Green. I know not with what truth. Col. Bellingham was thought till lately to be on the King's side, but it appears he has got friends at Court ... when he goes to any public business he rides with an array of men in his livery armed with spears ...”

“I had gone with Thomas on a pillion [to Kendal] to purchase some wares and was indeed surprised at the crowd I saw and the great men who came. Sir Francis Anderton of the Castle ... spoke to Thomas which pleased him much. They were meeting the judges who were travelling from Lancaster to Appleby under the protection of the Sheriff, Walter Strickland of Sizergh, who is now reconciled to the Parliament after paying his fine of £140. He has been made Comissioner of Land Tax and presses heavily they say on his neighbours.”

“ ... My husband is summoned to the jury and he will go with the other jurors from his part of the county early tomorrow, that they may have protection from the judges escort. He will be away 3 days as there are many cases to try, chiefly for purloining and sheep stealing. He is so tender of mind that I am sure he will try to vote ‘Not guilty’ where there is any danger of the prisoner being hung. I learn that there has been no hanging for many years in this county. He talks much of it and of seeing our great High Sheriffess, The Countess Anne, of Pembroke; it is recorded of her that she not only took her seat on the bench, but rode on a white charger before the Judges to open the Assizes.”⁴

Before Thomas’s departure, they went to collect a parcel from the carrier Richard Bateman which had only taken two weeks from Bristol.

“RB was very friendly and gave us bread and beer. He showed us his stables for 100 horses and we saw 2 packs of them come in with their leaders jangling a bell from their neck ... It must be a profitable business for he has built a fine house and panelled with oak. But he told my husband that in these disturbed times he lost many horses and often got no payment, beside the number lamed and injured on their back which we saw in his field. While we were there 2 gentlemen came in with their servants all well armed ... They told us of the wild state of the country on the Scottish borders and how they had ridden for their lives from some robbers who happily were only on foot. They swore a great deal but I believe that is common with such person, especially if they are of the King’s party ... We stopped in returning through Kendal and went to see the Parish Church ... quite a crowd and a debate going on between Thomas Taylor, Firbank Church and two other clergy.

T. Taylor said it was against the truth to baptise infants or to sign with the sign of the Cross like Papists, or to wear surplices ... great feeling among the people ... Among others was a fine looking young man from Preston Patrick who my husband talked to. His name is Wakefield and he has a small estate. He seemed a very proper man. This is indeed a fearful time and I am glad to reach home safely ...”

¹ G. M. Trevelyan, *History of England: New Illustrated Edition* (London: Longman, 1973).

² Thomas Jones, *The History of Burneside* (Kendal: Atkinson & Pollit, 1912)

³ His father, also James Cropper and descended from a line of Quakers, came to Burneside to take over the paper mill in 1845. One of the friends of the family was the Scottish writer, John Buchan of *The Thirty Nine Steps* fame, who set the opening of his novel, *The Dancing Floor*, in the Burneside area.

⁴ Lady Anne, a committed Royalist, had finally acquired her rightful inheritance in the north and with characteristic single-mindedness had set about restoring her neglected properties, against the advice of well-meaning friends convinced that Cromwell, “*as fast as she built up, would order it to be pulled down.*” He did not. With astute political nouse, Cromwell shrugged and reportedly said, “*Nay, let her build what she will, she shall have no hindrance from me.*”

Martin Rivington Holmes, *Proud Northern Lady: Lady Anne Clifford, 1590 – 1676*(London: Phillimore, 1975).

REPORTS OF EVENING MEETINGS

September 11th 2008 – Nelson and the “Victory”

The first talk of the new season was given by Admiral Sir John Kerr, whose subject was “Nelson and the Victory”. Sir John’s naval background obviously inspired this interest, plus the fact that, as Commander-in-Chief, Victory was his flagship.

Despite Victory’s fame nowadays, and her connection with Nelson, Nelson only served on her for the last two year’s of his life, and she languished as a hulk in Portsmouth after she was taken out of service in the 1820s until the 1920s, when interest in her revived and restoration began. She was already forty years old at the time of Trafalgar, evidence that the design of naval ships did not change very much. What gave the British navy the advantage during the final decades of the eighteenth century, when there was almost continuous warfare, and thereafter, was the professionalism of its officers and seamen. In addition the invention of the flintlock enabled British gunners to fire much faster than their French and Spanish opponents.

Nelson himself contributed by his matchless brilliance in terms of tactics, and the way in which he took care of the welfare of his crews, and always led from the front. In personal terms, he was a mixture of vanity and obsession (especially in his love for Emma Hamilton), and the above-mentioned brilliance, courage and human touch. His relationship with Emma Hamilton, and the obsession with which he pursued it, was probably what made him fall out of favour with the Victorians.

Sir John outlined the international politics of the era, discussed the design and equipping of the ships, the staffing and hierarchy of the navy, and the steps in Nelson's career, including some of his most notable battles. In this way he explained the reason for Britain's naval supremacy for most of the rest of the nineteenth century.

October 9th 2008 – The Stricklands of Sizergh

Mr. Dick White has been a National Trust volunteer at Sizergh Castle for eighteen years and says he is only just scratching the surface of the story of the Castle and the Strickland family, the owners since 1239. In spite of this, members and visitors at the Mourholme Local History Society meeting in October were glad to share in Mr. White's knowledge of this historic place. The National Trust has owned Sizergh Castle since 1950 and is currently undertaking extensive renovations, particularly to the fourteenth century solar tower, originally the family's private apartments; work has to be restricted to the months between April and October so that the large colony of bats is not disturbed.

The name Sizergh is probably of Scandinavian derivation, meaning something like Sigred's dairy farm. Walter Strickland (1516-1569) undertook extensive building work, much of which can still be seen. The Inlaid Chamber is particularly fine with panelling of oak inlaid with pale coloured poplar wood and dark bog oak. Walter was involved in border wars and seems to have prospered, he was involved with cattle droving and the plume of a holly faggot on the family coat of arms is thought to be a reference to this, maybe the original source of the family wealth. Other alterations were carried out in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Twentieth century additions included the beautiful rock garden, laid out in 1926 by Hayes of Ambleside and paid for by Lady Margaret Strickland, wife of Sir Gerald Strickland.

The house is a treasure trove of furniture, decorative features, artefacts, memorabilia and family portraits. Members of the family include Sir Thomas who supported James II and accompanied him to France in exile and Sir Gerald (1861-1940) whose public positions included being Prime Minister of Malta, MP for Lancaster and Governor of the Leeward Islands, Tasmania, Western Australia and New South Wales.

Mr. White's enthusiasm and interest in the house and the family were apparent in his presentation, whether explaining how he had identified the site where the marble was quarried for the wonderful fireplace in the Stone Room or searching for chestnut trees that could have been grown from nuts collected from Versailles by Cecilia Strickland in the eighteenth century, he certainly engaged the interest of his audience with his fascinating talk.

November 13th 2008 –

The Bare Bones of it: Archaeology of St. Oswald's Warton

The speaker for the November meeting was Mr. Nigel Neil, and his topic was the "Archaeology of St Oswald's, Warton".

He began by detailing his archaeological experience, covering locations as diverse as Orkney and Wiltshire, and interests, in particular in barns, gardens and churches.

The opportunity to do some research at St. Oswald's came a few years ago when the west end of the church was altered, and a kitchen with attendant plumbing was installed. The

archaeological work was necessarily done rather quickly, and the usual problem of disturbance due to earlier renovations and burials was encountered. Sixty four burials were found in the church, and 86 outside. Nearly all of these were post-mediaeval, and the few pieces of mediaeval pottery found were not sufficient to indicate a previous church, though there undoubtedly was one. The most interesting discoveries related to the state of health of the bodies exhumed. There was evidence of degenerative skeletal diseases such as arthritis, fractures, tooth decay, and of bone damage due to lifting and carrying heavy loads. Work is still continuing to try and determine diet. There was no sign of coffins, which may be due to the soil conditions, but, taken together with the other findings, suggest a poor and hardworking population. The bones are now awaiting reburial.

December 11th 2008 - “Have Packs: will Travel”

A Journey Through Lakeland with a Pack Horse

The speaker at our Christmas meeting was Janet Niepokończycka, telling us about her adventures on her June 1987 round tour of the Lake District with a pack pony, following the ancient packhorse routes. Her main influence was Robert Orrell who had done a similar tour in the 1970s. The main difference between them was that he rode one pony, and led the other with the packs, while Janet had only one pony for her luggage, and she herself went on foot.

Pack ponies were used in the north of England, especially in rugged terrain like the Lake District, until the end of the nineteenth century. They carried lead and other minerals, as well as all manner of other goods. However, it was very difficult to find written or oral sources to find out exactly how

such traffic was carried out, or what the routes were. Janet wanted to find out for herself.

Robert Orrell used Fell ponies, which are slightly smaller than the Dales pony Janet used. His name was William (as in Wordsworth), and, though only four years old and therefore quite a youngster, he proved to be a reliable and friendly companion.

The total journey was 400 miles. It included visits to several schools on the way, as well getting to the top of Scafell Pike, a great achievement for a pony. June 1987 broke rainfall records, so it was quite an endurance test for both Janet and William, especially as Janet camped most of the time.

After hearing about such rigours, we were ready for our Christmas buffet.

January 8th 2009 – Fishing in Morecambe Bay

Our January meeting gave us an insight into a way of life which has almost disappeared. Mr. Jack Manning is a fourth generation fisherman who worked out of Flookburgh. He described how boats were used to harvest flukes and mussels, but after the advent of the railways, the estuaries changed and the salt marsh extended. This, plus a disaster in 1912 in which three men from one family died, resulted in a change to using horses and carts on the sands, by which time cockles had replaced mussels as the main catch. Shrimps did not become important until the 1950s, when refrigeration became available, as they spoil more quickly.

The cockle stocks can fluctuate a lot, and, at one time there was a “plague” of oystercatchers, which cleaned out the beds.

There were no more for seven or eight years. The latest “plague”, of course, is the unregulated action of the large contractors. During Jack’s time there was strict inspection to make sure that only decent sized shellfish were collected and that the small ones were put back. That doesn’t happen now, although it should. The beds have been closed since April to allow some regeneration.

Local traditional fishing has not completely died out. Jack’s grandson is involved, although he has another trade to maintain him when there is no fishing, and several others also work out of Flookburgh. It is to be hoped that a more sensible regime will be evolved to protect a valuable natural resource.

February 12th 2009 - Wakes Holidays in Lancashire

At our February meeting, Dr. Robert Poole talked about Wakes holidays in the north west. The word “wake” means “vigil”, such as would have taken place on the eve of the feast of the patron saint of a church. In the days before church floors were flagged, the tradition was for young women and girls to bring rushes on these days to cover the church floors. And, of course, it was an excuse for some fun. Church floors were flagged in this region much later in than in most of England, so the traditional wakes holidays overlapped with industrialization. Far from declining, as the Victorians thought, these events were in fact strengthened in the weaving villages of south Lancashire and west Yorkshire. Huge piles of rushes were constructed on rush carts, with oak boughs and a man on top, and were pulled either by horses, or young men, to the local church. These were often preceded by Morris men, which is why Lancashire Morris is processional. There were often fairs, horse racing and other entertainments

alongside, and the local inns and alehouses played a prominent part.



(Picture taken from: Alfred Burton *Rush Bearing* (Manchester: Brook & Chrystal, 1891).)

As time went by, the nature of the wakes changed. They became weeks, and were staggered (as the original wakes holidays had been, according to the saint's day), so that not everyone was on holiday at the same time. The railways provided a way of going on a day out, or even longer, probably to Blackpool or Morecambe, so these places developed into flourishing resorts. The old-fashioned wakes with the rush cart still existed in some places until the early twentieth century, and the one at Saddleworth was revived in the 1970s. There are still rush-bearing ceremonies in Grasmere and Ambleside.

Jane Parsons and Jenny Ager

PROGRAMME March and April 2009

Meetings currently are held at the Yealand Village Hall, at 7.30pm 2nd Thursday of the month, September to April*.

March 12th Social History of Lancaster Castle
Mrs. Christine Goodyear
 Shire Hall Manager

April 9th A.G.M. followed by
 Lime Kilns and Lime Burning
Tony Keates

Please note that the speaker for the April meeting has been changed.

*Meeting Day

The meeting day will be changed from September 2009 from the 2nd Thursday of the month to the **4th Wednesday** of the month.

The first meeting of the new season will be on **Wednesday 23rd September 2009** at 7.30pm at Yealand Village Hall, when David Smail will give a talk on "The building of Devil's Bridge". The committee look forward to welcoming Society members and visitors to the meeting.

MOURHOLME SUMMER OUTING
THE DALES GATEWAY
Wednesday 15th July 2009
Open to members and non-members

Following our very enjoyable summer outing in July 2008, the Mourholme Local History Society is proposing to organize another summer outing. We are planning to use David Alison and Tracks North Tours again.

On the Dales Gateway Tour we would visit Skipton with its castle, shops and market; take to the water for a cruise on the Leeds – Liverpool canal; then go to Keighley and change our mode of transport again for a steam train ride on the Worth Valley Railway, the setting for the film *The Railway Children*.



The last stop would be at Haworth with time to explore the village in the heart of the Brontë country. The day would end with the coach taking us back to our local pick-up points.



The outing would involve a day trip by coach with locally arrange pick-up points, both members and non-members are welcome. The cost would be approximately £28, to include all travel costs and the services of a guide. The proposed date is Wednesday 15th July.

NOTES AND QUERIES

Earlier editions of The Mourholme Magazine of Local History had a section entitled "Notes and Queries". This section of the magazine was announced in Volume I, no.3. Spring 1983 by the editor Mrs. Nancy Thomas:

"We would still like to have a Notes and Correspondence section in the magazine, but we have yet to receive our first Note or our first Letter.

What we had in mind were short comments on published articles, possibly additional material in support or otherwise, or ideas suggested by magazine articles or from other sources that might result in magazine articles, or suggestions for research, etc."

I would like to echo this request.

In this present edition of the Magazine Clive Holden's article includes many queries. It would be interesting to be able to fill in the gaps in the information about the area in 1946.

Robert Wearing is the great grandfather of Norman Wearing of Greenford in Middlesex, he wrote to the Society hoping to find out more about his ancestor, and although we have asked people at meetings if they can throw any light on him, we have drawn a blank so far. In the 1861 census Robert Wearing is living in Main Street Warton, the schedule number is 36, the vicarage is number 50, can anyone work out which house Robert Wearing's was?

Jenny Ager